



RESEARCH BRIEF

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A Gender Assessment of Sustainable Conservation-Oriented Enterprises

Deborah Rubin (Cultural Practice LLC), Cristina Manfre (dTS) and Smita Malpani (dTS)

This research brief summarizes the findings of a gender assessment of sustainable conservation-oriented enterprises for review by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). It was produced by Development & Training Services, Inc. (dTS) for the Greater Access to Trade Expansion (GATE) Project, a task order of the Office of the Women in Development, for USAID/EGAT/WID and USAID/Kenya. The larger report is based on the findings of the gender assessment team during travel in Kenya from September 11 to October 2, 2007 primarily to sites around Nairobi and in Laikipia and Samburu Districts to the north and northeast. It also builds on a desktop review of activities in other parts of the country. The objective of this study was to identify specific business development constraints facing men and women engaged in nature-based income-generating activities and recommend strategies and interventions to increase the socio-economic benefits of biodiversity conservation through nature-based enterprises to men and women.

INTRODUCTION

A number of key sectors in Kenya's economy, including tourism and agriculture, rely on the use of natural resources. Developing efforts to reduce the unsustainable use of these resources and protect them is therefore important to support sustained economic growth. USAID/Kenya provides support to conservation efforts and natural resource management through its Strategic Objective (SO) 5, "Improved Environmental and Natural Resource Management in Targeted, Biodiverse Areas." Activities falling under SO5 include nature-based enterprises (NBEs), which aim to link biodiversity conservation goals to income-generating activities. USAID/Kenya has made several coordinated efforts to improve involvement of poor women and men, and address gender inequalities in enterprises that rely on natural resources and are intended to have an impact on conservation efforts.

UNDERSTANDING SUSTAINABLE CONSERVATION-ORIENTED ENTERPRISES

Enterprises based on natural products and services are termed in the report, "sustainable conservation-oriented enterprises" (SCOE) to emphasize the dual goals of conservation and economic viability. These enterprises are categorized into four types: cultivation; eco-tourism (wildlife- and landscape-based); harvesting of natural products; and, cultural practices. This division is based on the character of the interaction between "nature" and the enterprise, the type of income generation, and the contribution to conservation built into the enterprise.

- **Cultivation-based enterprises**

In which seeds or insect larvae or young animals are harvested from wild sources (aloe, butterfly pupae, honey), but cultivated to maturity through a direct interaction with the owners of the enterprise and human labor in a controlled process.

- **Eco-tourism based enterprises**

In which, the fundamental character of the environment is conserved through careful resource management and reduction of human-wildlife conflict on those lands that are the basis on which the enterprise depends. Communities generally earn income from eco-tourism based enterprises through payments of land rent, bed-night fees, conservation feeds, employment, and/or related activities.

- 1) **Wildlife-based enterprises** – the enterprise is based on the tourist's passive ability to view the wildlife, e.g., on game tours, but the enterprise owners (of the tour company, the lodge, etc.) do not directly control the wildlife's migration or actions nor is the wildlife changed by the enterprise.

- 2) **Landscape-based enterprises** – the enterprise is based on the tourist's passive ability to view the landscape and/or to interact with it through activities such as rock-climbing, rafting, biking, and hiking. The enterprise owners (e.g., tour company, the lodge, etc.) do not change the landscape.
- **Natural products-based enterprises**
In which natural products are harvested from the environment directly through the labor of the enterprise owner, often by several people or groups at the same time. Over-extraction can degrade the environment.
 - **Culture-based enterprises**
In which cultural knowledge is the basis for the enterprise – bead work and other handicrafts, home stays, ethnic dancing and singing, ethnic food sales. The enterprise is not directly linked to nature (or it would be listed above), but the enterprise substitutes for the loss of income resulting from other conservation efforts (e.g., reduction in grazing of livestock or loss of grazing areas).

GENDER ISSUES IN DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING SCOE: KEY FINDINGS

Both the type of SCOE as well as the landscape in which that SCOE is located influence the gender issues that need to be considered in activity design and implementation. Within and across these enterprise and landscape types, ethnic and cultural ideas about gender categories and the appropriate roles, behaviors, and responsibilities for men and women affect who is encouraged to or prohibited from participating in different occupations or becoming members of different groups. Gender differences also influence who benefits from group membership. Many gender issues, such as women's relative lack of education compared to men as shown in literacy and numeracy rates, present important challenges across all types of enterprises. Others vary in their importance across the enterprise types and may be addressed by careful consideration in the design, implementation, and monitoring of gender-sensitive indicators during the project cycle. The discussion below addresses only the primary gender considerations the team identified for each enterprise type.

GENDER ISSUES IN CULTIVATION-BASED (PLANT AND ANIMAL) ENTERPRISES

Access to land is the primary gender issue associated with plant-cultivation enterprises. Gendered patterns of access to and ownership over land vary widely. In some parts of Kenya, land tenure systems grant individuals ownership to land, while in pastoral groups, land is held in common by the community and is governed by a group ranch. It is important to know, in proposing new cultivation-based enterprises, whether women will have access to and control over sufficient land to support the economic viability of the activity. Similar constraints and opportunities in relation to ownership of animals are at work in animal husbandry.

Access to labor by women is often shaped by household or familial relationships; their ability to hire labor is often dependent on access to credit for payment of wages, unless cooperative work groups are established to provide labor in sequence to members of the group.

Access to information such as market information, pricing, appropriate plant varieties, and time and locations to sell products is critical for growing a business. Poor women in Kenya typically have less formal education, lower literacy rates, and less familiarity with market information than do men. They may also need to learn new cultivation techniques.

Access to capital varies culturally, by household, and by individual. Cultivation enterprises will require capital for seeds, tools, and labor, and possibly for land rent. Payment is likely to be required for transport of the product.

GENDER ISSUES IN WILDLIFE-BASED ECO-TOURISM ENTERPRISES

Access to membership and participation in management structures is understood as a lack of access to political capital.^{*} Because of the mobility of the wildlife resource, direct access to the land itself is less critical than rights to membership and participation in the groups that make decisions over land use. Among the pastoral groups that live in those areas and which have formed group ranches, men continue to predominate in the management of the group ranch committees.

^{*} Political capital refers to access to voice and representation in the governing structures of one's household, community, locality, and nation.

Access to employment can be limited by ideas about appropriate roles for men and women in wildlife management or tourism activities. For example, women in the activities reviewed are not employed as tour guides or scouts because of concerns over safety, whereas elsewhere in East Africa, women perform as guides.

GENDER ISSUES IN LANDSCAPE-BASED ECO-TOURISM ENTERPRISES

Access to land and decisions over land use predominate as critical gender issues in the development of enterprises based on landscapes. As with wildlife-based ecotourism, landscape-based ecotourism enterprises often depend on community management, and in those, the key gender issues revolve around political participation. Pertinent questions to consider in designing these landscape-based

enterprises relate to land ownership and control such as (i) whether women have permanent rights to the property under consideration for the project, (ii) whether there is rent to pay or (iii) if the land (or other natural resource) is owned and titled. Both men and women should be involved in the discussions about the establishment of the enterprise, even if it will be run by a single-sex group.

Access to capital is important and women, as noted earlier, may find it more difficult to accumulate sufficient resources to start and/or maintain their businesses.

GENDER ISSUES IN NATURAL PRODUCT BASED-ENTERPRISES

Time and mobility often constrain women's ability to participate in enterprises. Most women experience significant time poverty; they have insufficient time to complete their household and child care responsibilities because obtaining and cooking food and finding water and firewood take hours of every day. Women can be at a disadvantage in collecting the raw materials for the enterprise unless they pass by the materials on their way to find their daily supplies of wood and water. They are further constrained by a lack of rural infrastructure and of transport. In some situations, women may be prevented from traveling because of concerns about security or by local cultural norms.

Access to information can hinder business development. Women will need information to select materials and identify the products most likely to sell in domestic and overseas markets. Locally-collected honey or essential oils, for example, need to meet both quality and quantity criteria, and regularity of supply needs to be maintained. While women are sometimes believed to have greater knowledge than men of the medicinal properties of indigenous plants or of their locations, they may not be familiar with the species with the best prospects for the market or with pricing, packaging, marketing, or other aspects of business development.

Access to capital is also important for transportation and marketing.

GENDER ISSUES IN CULTURE-BASED ENTERPRISES

How to engage men is the important gender issue for culture-based enterprises. It is curious that although men and women are equally shapers of and shaped by their cultural beliefs and practices, most of the culture-based enterprises in the areas assessed have been fashioned around the work of women, whether it is handicrafts, food, or song and dance. Some exceptions include dances by Masaai and Samburu men at safari lodges and the sale of men's wood carvings.

BUILDING GENDER EQUITABLE PARTNERSHIPS IN ECO-TOURISM

Different models of partnership arrangements for eco-tourism facilities involve varying levels of community participation in eco-tourism activities and community reliance on private investors. These range from arrangements in which a private individual or company owns, operates and markets the tourist facility to arrangements in which the ownership, operation and marketing of the facility are mixed between a private partner and the community. "Strategic partners" often mediate the relationship between communities and private investors. They help monitor and promote transparency of agreements among the community. Gender issues have not been taken into account either in the work of the strategic partner or in the content of the partnership agreements. When building partnership agreements for eco-tourism enterprises, it is recommended that donors work with "strategic partners" to develop gender-equitable principles that would form part of each partnership agreement. Suggested principles could include such items as:

- Establishing a minimum percentage of employment opportunities that will a) be fulfilled by the community and b) fulfilled by the women of the community. Tracking of these jobs should be disaggregated by sex;
- Identifying employment opportunities for women in under-represented areas such as tour guides;
- Ensuring that women are permitted to become registered members of group ranches, as permitted by Kenyan law;
- Developing strategies to improve women's participation in the governing bodies of group ranches;
- Supporting group ranches efforts to update their membership lists regularly; and
- Ensuring that both men and women participate in the negotiation of the partnership agreement.

Opportunities do exist for men to become more involved in culture-based enterprises. In some areas, men expressed a desire to form their own groups and begin to work in men's handicrafts and other cultural artifacts for sale. Constraints to address in developing men's enterprises are similar to those for women and include lack of knowledge of the market, quality control, and general business development skills.

Time is a big challenge for women's involvement in these enterprises. Beading is popular because it can be taken up and put down without loss of momentum or sacrifice of quality. It is also a portable activity. Women's disproportionate responsibility for reproductive activities* is a challenge for their participation in culture-based income-generating activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In developing new activities and managing current ones in Sustainable Conservation-Oriented Enterprises, USAID can make changes in its own management procedures as well as in its work with its partners in the field to build more gender-equitable activities. It is recommended that USAID:

- Build into new activity design a requirement for baseline data on men's and women's levels and sources of income and other assets. Monitoring plans should track changes to these income and asset levels to permit measurement of the activities' impact on financial benefits.
- Build into new activity design efforts to determine the appropriateness of establishing men's, women's, and/or mixed-sex community group enterprises. Discussions should be held in communities that involve both men and women to explain and design the formation of any new groups to inhibit backlash and/or the perception of favored status.
- Build the capacity of partners to integrate gender into market and value chain assessments to understand how men and women are employed in different activities; identify gender-related bottlenecks that can lower efficiency, impede upgrading, and reduce technology; and, understand gender inequalities related to the distribution of power along the chain.
- Support existing programs and programs soon to close to report on gender issues they have encountered in their work and encourage them to provide documentation on how these issues were successfully (or unsuccessfully) addressed, so that other projects can learn from their experiences. Such "gender narratives" can become important information about how to address USAID's two key questions of the ADS in relation to gender integration (ADS 201).

Within each of the SCOE's, illustrative activities are provided for projects to consider that offer opportunities for women and/or men.

Illustrative activities in **cultivation-based enterprises** include *inter alia*:

- Involving women in cultivation of over-exploited plant species, essential oils, seeds/pods
- New animal initiatives: (small animals or insects, e.g., sericulture, apiculture, butterflies, ducks and turkeys)
- Environmental protection, including plants to curb erosion or to revegetate degraded areas
- Forming women's groups to organize labor pools
- Obtaining micro- and larger credit loans.

Illustrative activities in **eco-tourism enterprises** include *inter alia*:

- Engaging men in developing strategies to improve women's participation in group resource management
- Increasing women's wage employment in lodges and conservancies and as tour guides
- Environmental protection, including plants to curb erosion or to revegetate degraded areas.

Illustrative activities in **natural products enterprises** include *inter alia*:

* Reproductive activities refer activities related to the care and maintenance of the household and its members, e.g. child care, food preparation, family healthcare, housekeeping, collection of fuel and water, etc.

- Monitoring extraction of natural products that have been determined to have market potential to avoid over extraction, e.g., mushrooms, honey, butterflies, medicinal plants, plants with essential oils, basket and mat -making fronds
- Value-added processing of these products.

Illustrative activities in **culture-based enterprises** include:

- Supporting greater vertical integration of women's handicraft production to permit higher markup and retention of profits
- Linking to tour operators
- Improving market outlets
- Promoting men's involvement in handicraft production.

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To receive the full report, or for more information on other gender and trade-related research, please email GATEProject@onlinedts.com or call 703-465-9388.